

Delaware Department of Justice Files To Shut Down Newark Massage Parlor As Criminal Nuisance

A complaint filed by Attorney General Matt Denn's office asks the state Superior Court to declare a Newark property housing the Rose Spa massage parlor a criminal nuisance because of prostitution occurring there, and asks for potential closure of the business.

As stated in the complaint, the defendants, Stella Family Enterprises, LLC, the owners of the property, and tenant Ji Long Zhao each face two counts of Maintaining a Nuisance Property because of the massage parlor in operation at 430 Old Baltimore Pike. Stella Family Enterprises is included in the complaint by DOJ as a matter of establishing jurisdiction over the property, but has engaged in an action – contested by the current tenant – to evict the Rose Spa, so the criminal nuisance complaint was filed as well.

Between September and October 2016, Delaware State Police conducted an investigation focused on prostitution at the Rose Spa. On separate occasions, employees of the Rose Spa offered to perform sex acts for undercover officers in exchange for additional payment. Two employees were arrested in October 2016, and at trial in the summer of 2017, determined to be victims of human trafficking. In August 2017, another Rose Spa employee offered sex acts for money, with an undercover officer paying the additional fee, but leaving after refusing the service.

The complaint was filed under the state's Criminal Nuisance Abatement Act, which empowers the Attorney General "to

authorize temporary and permanent abatement relief and other remedies to abate any criminal nuisance,” as stated in Title 10, Section 7102 of the Delaware Code.

The complaint asks the Court to:

- Prohibit the defendants and any other person from further maintaining a nuisance at the property or elsewhere in Delaware;
- Issue an order prohibiting all the defendants from engaging in business activities at the Old Baltimore Pike property
- Assess civil penalties

Deputy Attorneys General Oliver Cleary and Zoe Plerhoples are leading the case for the Department of Justice.